

Elder Abuse Investigations and Prosecution

One Stop Shop
Success

A system that is proven to work

- Gang suppression units
- Major Narcotics units
- Government - All of the different states work toward a common goal (at least they say they do)

Sierra Resource Center Campus

- Fresno Madera Area Agency on Aging - Meals on Wheels, etc
- In Home Supportive Services
- Valley Caregivers Resource Center
- Ombudsman Program

- Fresno County Sheriffs Department Elder Abuse Investigation Unit
- Fresno Police Department Elder Abuse Investigation Unit
- Adult Probation -Victim Witness Services
- Older Adult Mental Health
- Medi-Cal Aged, Blind & Disabled Services
- With Regular visits by:
 - District Attorney vertical prosecutor
 - Public Guardians Office

Partnerships

- Money is tight for everybody
- Work together towards a common goal
- Seek out corporate sponsor's
- Let them get the good press, they benefit from the good press, you benefit from the financial support

Fresno S.R.C.- 2nd Floor- Fresno City and County Elder Abuse Unit

- Secured portion
- Fresno Police Department Elder Abuse Unit
- Fresno Sheriffs Department Elder Abuse Unit

SRC Second Floor - Continued

- Adult Probation - victim witness services-elder abuse
- Adult Protective Services
- Interview rooms
- Video room

Fresno S.R.C. Main Building

- Public Authority over IHSS
- Medi-Cal / Medicaid Services
- Older Adult Mental Health
- Seniors Computer lab
- Diner
- County Library with materials for seniors

Sierra Resource Center - Future

- Day activities for seniors, full service senior center with activities
- Geriatric medical walk-in center

Tour of the SRC

- Let's go together now for a short tour of the Sierra Resource Center – This might be a fast walk so get your walking shoes on-Since I am the tour guide, we will pause at the second floor, my personal favorite in the building...but let us start in front as we just arrived.

Co-Location and working together

- Who is involved?
- Why?
- Cops VS. Social Workers
- Problems
- Benefits

Who?

- Law Enforcement
- Adult Protective Services
- Victim Witness Services
- Public Guardians Office
- District Attorneys Office
- Older Adult Mental Health

Who?---continued

- In Home Supportive Services
- Local Agency on Aging
- Ombudsman

Why are these agencies involved?

- All of these agencies have the same goal - protection of the Elderly from harm and theft

Problems-

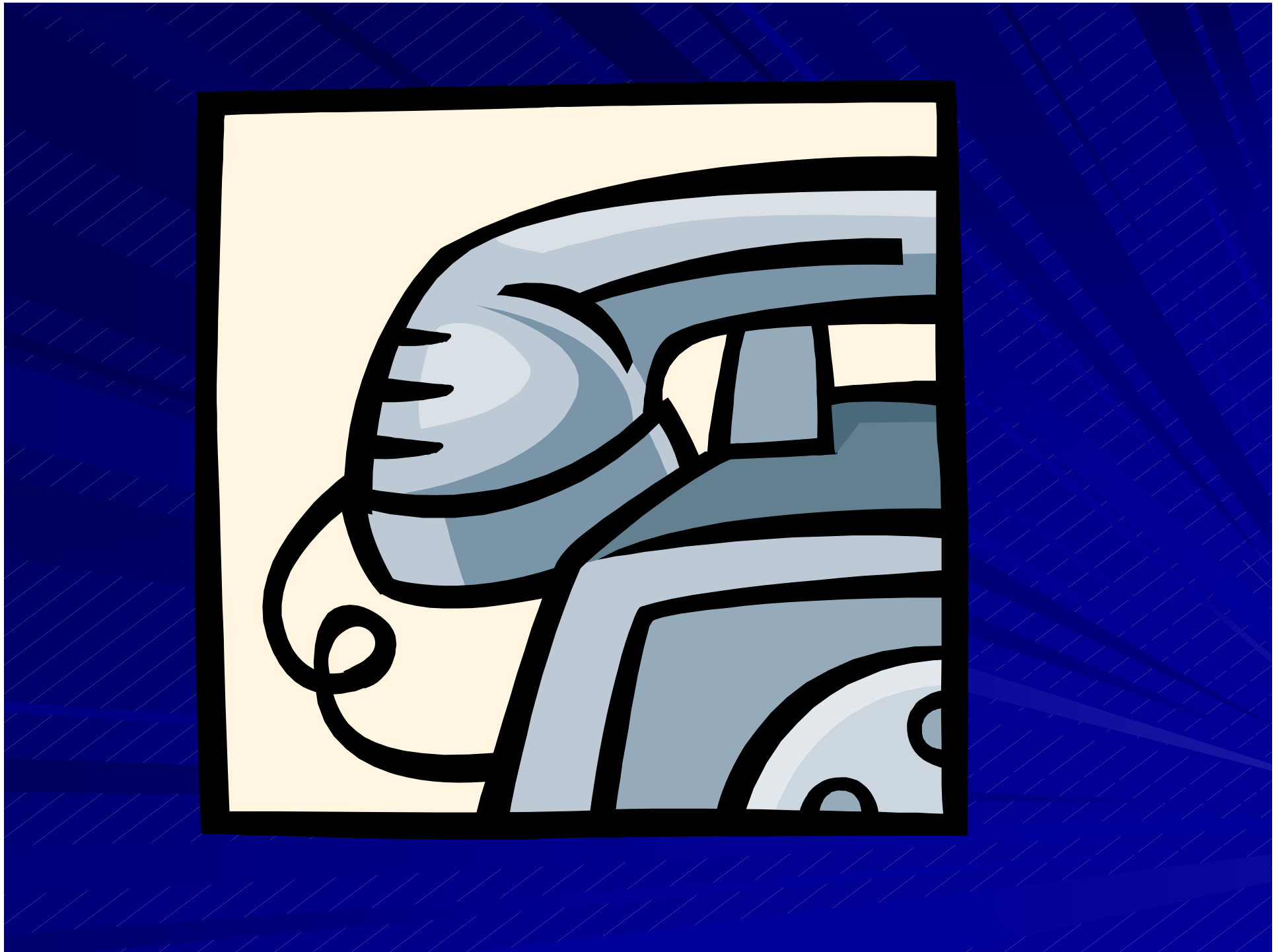
- Confidentiality - majority have same requirements so releasing information to somebody in the group still restricts it from going public and still maintains confidentiality
- Cops have to learn that social workers are not their enemies, but are beneficial

Problems - continued

- Social workers need to understand that Cops are not a bunch of knuckle dragging cave men that shoot first and ask questions later
- Cops are part social worker and social workers are part cop

Answers -

- If you need help, which of the next two pictures do you think will give you the most help?
- One will get you an answer
- One will help you and give you an answer





Face to Face Meetings

- When you talk to somebody on the phone, it is impersonal
- When you stand in front of somebody that you have met, it is easier to discuss the case and work out a solution
- Put a face to a name
- Make a connection

Result of a face to face meeting

- Next time you call and ask for help, you will get more assistance
- It is no longer just a voice, it is a person - on both ends of the phone
- Personalizes

Everybody that works in this field

- Meet and talk- do not limit yourself to the phone. Put a face with a voice
- Make it personal
- Obtain and Share training materials and contacts. Remember, this is not just for us, it is for the Elders



Our ultimate goal is to imprison the person responsible

Cops and District Attorneys

- Find at least one in each agency that cares about Elder Abuse- you either want to work it or you hate working it
- If you can not dedicate somebody to just this, make one person responsible in each agency for all elder abuse cases
- Train others
- Become one stop shop for elders

Cops and Attorneys

- More alike than some people realize
- Some lawyers like doughnuts
- Most cops like to argue
- Both stand up for what they feel is right
- Both believe in the law

Problems with Attorneys

- Get distracted when an ambulance drives by
- Speak in lawyereze
- Heavy case load
- Forced to Plea Bargain just to clear case's

Problems with Law Enforcement

- Hard to find willing, trained investigators in small towns (but they are there)
- Low paid law enforcement positions
- Turf wars
- Egos and personalities

Law Enforcement

- Ego
- John Wayne Syndrome
- Enforcer of the law
- Likes to keep what he has discovered
- Has to prepare a case for the D.A. and the courts

Law Enforcement - continued

- Feels that he/she is the boss and his word is final
- Has been given great authority and power- goes with John Wayne Syndrome
- Not used to working with social workers
- Deals with confidential reports

Adult Protective Service Workers

- Social workers
- Generally have little understanding of collection and preservation of evidence
- D.A. does not want summaries, they want prosecution reports, affidavits, and evidence
- APS is good at taking care of victims needs

Social Workers

- Took job to help others
- Tries to find non violent solutions
- Looks at quality of life for victim
- Takes the time to resolve situations over time
- Deals with confidential reports

Cops VS Social workers

- Oil and Water
- Use necessary force versus finding a solution by peaceful means
- Use of a night stick versus use of a pen

Co-Location Not Possible for Us

- When possible, have a meeting to meet the people in the other units- put a face to a name
- Offer assistance to the other agencies so that you can give assistance in return
- Acknowledge their assistance and tell them how their help helped
 - everybody likes to hear thanks

Co-location not possible

- If there is good press - share how the other agencies were helpful
- Don't be afraid to assist in other matters when possible
- Share your knowledge and expertise
- Don't brush off somebody from an assisting agency- take a moment to listen and talk

What do you need?

- At least one person (field worker) that really cares. Somebody that looks at it as more than just a job
- At least one person very high in organization that wants this to work

What do you need to do?

- Get political - make the public and public officials See the Elders
- Become a person that people can call for answers to problems
- Share what you learn - Knowledge is only good if you share it
- Understand that none of us stands alone- we are all one large team

What do you need to do?

- Build a contact file
- Create two groups of concerned persons in the different disciplines that meet on a regular basis- one that is covered under confidentiality and one that is open to the public
- Become a person, not just a name

Training - multi agencies

- Yearly conference- A must have
- Attendance by multi agencies needed
- Bring law enforcement and social services together through training and conferences
- Start people talking
- Learn together

Who will benefit?

■ District Attorneys

- Better investigations
- More help for the victims
- Less court time
- More golf time

Who will benefit?

■ Defense Attorneys

- Less court time
- More golf time

Who will benefit?

■ Judges

- Less court time
- More golf time

Who will benefit?

■ Crooks

- Less money wasted on lawyers
- Free room and board
- New long time friends
- Free schooling, cable T.V., counseling, legal help
- No golf time

Victims

- Better Investigations

- More help with their problems

- results from talking between law enforcement and social services about the needs of the victim
- Better quality of life
- One stop for help

Benefits

- Both sides are getting the same information, thus wasting valuable man hours
- Victims benefit by not having to repeat the same story
- Social workers can get answers to some things that law enforcement can not
- Law enforcement can get answers that social workers can not

Benefits continued

- Victim does not feel that they are getting the runaround
- Law enforcement learns more about how social workers think
- Social workers learn how cops think
- Law enforcement and social workers learn to understand each other and work together

Benefits continued

- The social worker gets the satisfaction of knowing that his work paid off when and if an arrest and conviction is had
- Law enforcement gets the satisfaction of knowing that his victim has an improved quality of life because of Social Services

Benefits Continued

- District Attorneys get better cases
- The court process gets the full picture that includes the crime and the effect of the crime
- The public gets a better system for dealing with Elder Abuse
- THE VICTIM WINS !!!!!



Questions?